

A Study on Prevalence of Body Image Dissatisfaction Among Adolescents and Young Adults

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ABSTRACT:

Body image refers to an individual's emotional attitudes, perceptions and beliefs regarding their own body. This study investigates the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among adolescents and young adults in Thiruvalla Taluk, using a cross-sectional descriptive study, data were collected from 500 over a six-month period through a predesigned questionnaire and google forms with Contour drawing figure rating scale (FRS). Key findings revealed a significant prevalence of body image dissatisfaction, with 56.44% of females and 43.56% of males reporting dissatisfaction. Females exhibited higher levels of dissatisfaction compared to males. Specifically, 31.91% of adolescent males were inclined to gain weight, whereas 40.51% of adolescent females preferred to be thinner. Among young adults, 40.54% of males aimed to gain weight, while 38.46% of females aimed to lose weight. Overall, young adults showed higher dissatisfaction (74.49%) compared to adolescents. These results underscore the need for targeted interventions to address body image concerns, considering the significant impact of gender, age, and lifestyle factors on body image perception.

Keywords: Body Image Dissatisfaction, Adolescents, Young Adults, Figure Rating Scale, BMI, Diet, and Physical activity, Stress, Peer, Family, Media, Anxiety.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Body image is the term used to describe a person's emotional attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about their own body. Body image refers to a person's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about their body, which can affect both mental and physical health. It includes **four aspects**, how one sees (perceptual), feels (affective), thinks (cognitive), and acts (behavioral) regarding their body. Factors including friends, family, the media, and society as a whole, can contribute to body image dissatisfaction. The "thin-ideal" for female beauty and the "athletic image" for males appear to be the main sources of pressure from the media and society. Teenagers are more susceptible to this pressure,⁽²⁾ The development of BID has been linked to the significant impact of negative family communication around body image, including taunting, criticism, and encouragement to diet. ⁽⁸⁾ Most societies have nearly always created ideals of beauty and

attractiveness, which has often been extremely difficult to achieve. Media does not directly cause the development of body dissatisfaction but reminds individuals more about their body concerns.⁽⁷⁾

Adolescence is a critical period marked by major physical, psychological, and social changes, during which body image dissatisfaction is common. Guided by **social identity theory and social learning theory**, it is understood that peer influence and social interactions significantly shape adolescents' self-concepts and body attitudes. Girls, in particular, are more likely to experience dissatisfaction, often aspiring to a thin ideal, while boys may desire a more muscular physique. These pressures are reinforced by friends, family, and especially the media, which promotes unrealistic body standards. This dissatisfaction affects adolescents' mental and physical health, including their eating habits and self-esteem. Even girls from disadvantaged backgrounds show unwarranted concerns about body image, underlining the urgent need for interventions that promote healthy attitudes toward body image, nutrition, and physical activity.

Causes of body image dissatisfaction:

1. Body comparison:

One of the main causes of teenagers and young adults negative body image was body comparison, where they compared their bodies to those of their friends or the others in their immediate social circle. Factors compared are usually thin ideal appearance, great skin tone, flat tummy and curvy body in the case of females whereas in the case of males, tends to be a fitness freak, good skin tone, hair and an athletic body image.⁽¹²⁾

2. Social beauty standards:

One of the main causes of unsatisfactory body image is the ideals of beauty set by society. They are under a lot of strain from societies concept of beauty standards. According to society's criteria of beauty, one must be tall, thin, have a flat stomach, muscular body and have a fair complexion. These are the irrational beauty standards that the society has established.

3. Social media:

Social media plays an important role in developing a negative body image. The pressure of posting the perfect picture and acquiring likes on social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram may make a person to start questioning their appearances, especially when they are not getting enough likes and views. Models or actors on social media are seen as perfect slender, tall, no pimples just flawless, which creates this standard of what beautiful should look like

4. Body shaming by family and friends:

When friends and family make mean comments about a person's appearance, it impacts the person more deeply.

5. Lack of self-confidence:

Bullying can lead to a negative body image, which causes people to compare themselves to others, which undermines their confidence. Additionally lowering self-confidence is a realization that one is constantly being judged by others.

6. Stress, anxiety and avoidance:

When being unable to attain the beauty standards made by the society, adolescents and young adults might feel stressed and might feel avoided from their social circle. These recurrent thoughts may emerge stress, anxiety and self-avoidance from participating in social activities.⁽¹²⁾

7. Puberty:

The bodily changes that occur during adolescence surpass those encountered at any other life stage, except

infancy. As their body is transition during puberty stage, they face the challenge of adapting to a novel physical appearance that evoke feelings unfamiliarity, and clumsiness. Puberty represents not only a physical transformation but also a socially integrated process that influences one's perception of body image.

8. Romantic relationship's

Adolescence is usually the time when romantic relationships start to emerge. According to research, teenage girls in love relationships may attempt to alter their bodies by diets more frequently than their single peers and the perception of romantic partner's pressure to be thin has been linked to body dissatisfaction.

9. Peer Relationships

The adolescent years are a crucial developmental stage for the formation and modification of peer relationships. Peers have a significant influence on how adolescents feel about their bodies. Studies show that teenage males and girls talk to their friends about how they look and how they change their look (e.g., by dieting or gaining muscle), and that social pressure is linked to adolescents attempts to change their bodies behaviourally. When evaluating their appearance, females seem to compare themselves to other models and their same-sex friends more than boys do, yet social comparison negatively affects both boys and girls body image.

COMPONENTS	SUB- COMPONENTS
The causes of body image dissatisfaction.	▪ Body comparison ▪ Societal beauty standards ▪ Social media ▪ Body shaming by Family and Friends
The challenges faced by student with body dissatisfaction	▪ Lack of self-confidence ▪ Stress and avoidance ▪ Anxiety
Coping strategies used by adolescents and young adults experiencing body Dissatisfaction	▪ Acceptance ▪ Exercise and healthy diet ▪ Self-care

Strategies to overcome body image dissatisfaction:

1. **Acceptance:** Acceptance is the first step to cope up with body image dissatisfaction. Accepting one's self body image as it is having a crucial role in overcoming body image dissatisfaction. Accepting one's body parts, skin and personality features and also learning that people are unique and will never have the same body. Our differences prove the intelligence of the almighty Acceptance is the key, and stop entertaining other people's comments about yourself. Focus on the positive rather than the negative and just accept yourself for who you are.
2. **Self-care:** Focus on activities that make you feel happy, confident, and fulfilled. Whether it's exercise, hobbies, or spending time with loved ones, prioritize activities that boost your mood and self-esteem.
3. **Exercise and healthy dieting:** Exercise and a healthy diet can play significant roles in influencing body image satisfaction. Should be stress free about the things that you can change. Engaging in

regular exercise and maintaining a nutritious diet, weight management can contribute positively to body image satisfaction and as well as helpful to improve mood and reduced symptoms of anxiety.

4. **Limit exposure to triggering content:** Be mindful of the media you consume, including social media, magazines, and television shows. Unfollow accounts or avoid content that makes you feel bad about your body.
5. **Remember that beauty comes in all shapes and sizes** Believe that everything has its own beauty and believe in yourself. Focus on celebrating diversity and embracing the uniqueness of your own body rather than striving for an unrealistic ideal.

2. STUDY METHODOLOGY:

STUDY DESIGN:

This study was designed as a Cross-Sectional Descriptive Study, which was carried out in 2 Schools and 3 Colleges, Thiruvalla taluk, Kerala for a time-period of 6 months. The sample size was determined to be 500 participants. The study was conducted after receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board of Nazareth College of Pharmacy, Othara, Thiruvalla.

For this study, a set of pre-determined criteria was developed:

- **INCLUSION CRITERIA:**
- Population of age between 13-25.
- **EXCLUSION CRITERIA:**
- Pediatrics below age 12.
- Differently abled student population.
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Sources of Data:

The data sources include schools and colleges.

Data Collection Technique:

A pilot study was conducted at Nazareth college of Pharmacy using a pre-designed questionnaire to assess the feasibility of the proposed study. Participants were enrolled in the study according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The data was collected through Community visits to the Schools and Colleges of Thiruvalla Taluk. Participants were asked to fill out a prepared questionnaire to determine the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction and the influence of life style factors like BMI, Diet and Physical activity. Individuals were provided with a brief introduction regarding the study and confidentiality of data was explained to them. The pre-designed questionnaire forms were provided to the school students and google forms to the rest and they were collected back and a short verbal awareness were given to the study subjects.

Data Collection Tools:

- Pre-Designed Questionnaire
- Google forms with Contour drawing figure rating scale (FRS).
- Informed Consent form
- Statistical Analysis: The data collected were entered in the MS excel 2021 version and results were analyzed as tabular form and percentage.

3. RESULTS

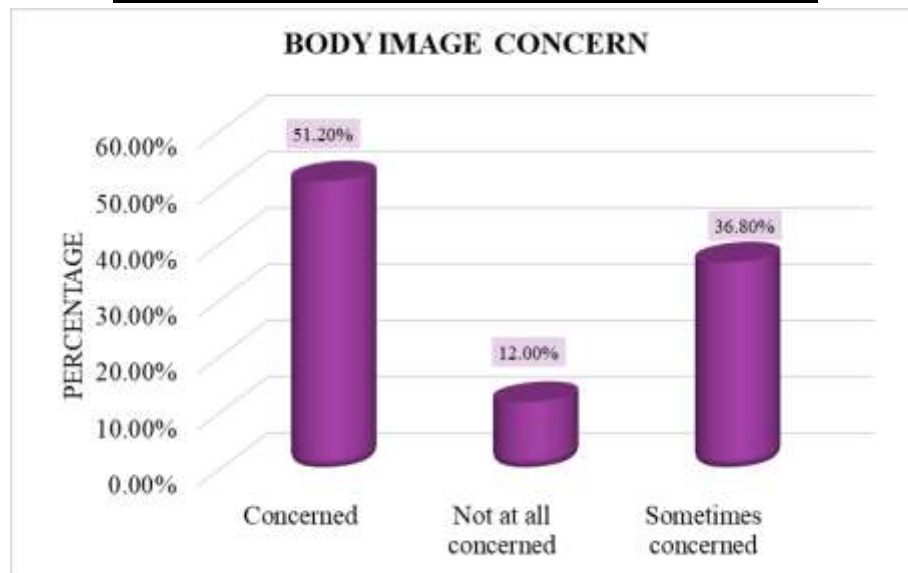
The study aimed to obtain data and to assess the prevalence of Body Image Dissatisfaction among Adoles-

cents and Young Adults. This was a cross – sectional descriptive study conducted in schools and colleges of Thiruvalla taluk. The data were collected using a questionnaire.

TABLE 1: DATA ON BODY IMAGE CONCERN.

Sl.NO	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Concerned	256	51.20%
2	Not at all concerned	60	12.00%
3	Sometimes concerned	184	36.80%
	TOTAL	500	100.00%

FIGURE 1: DATA ON BODY IMAGE CONCERN.

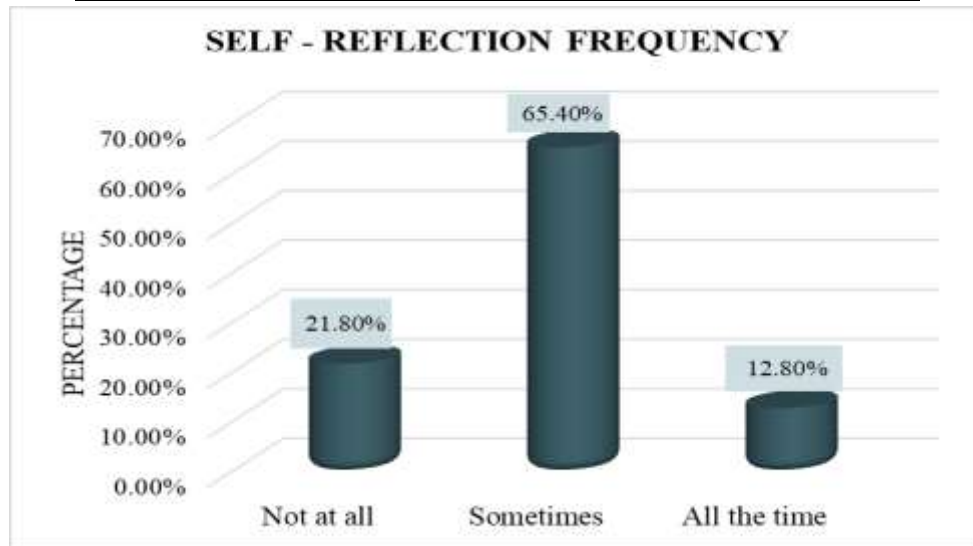


According to the aforementioned graph, out of 51.20% of the total 500 study participants were concerned about their body size, 12 % were not at all concerned and 36.80% were sometimes concerned.

TABLE 2 : DATA ON SELF- REFLECTION FREQUENCY

SL.NO	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Not at all	109	21.80%
2	Sometimes	327	65.40%
3	All the time	64	12.80%
	TOTAL	500	100.00%

FIGURE 2 : DATA ON SELF- REFLECTION FREQUENCY



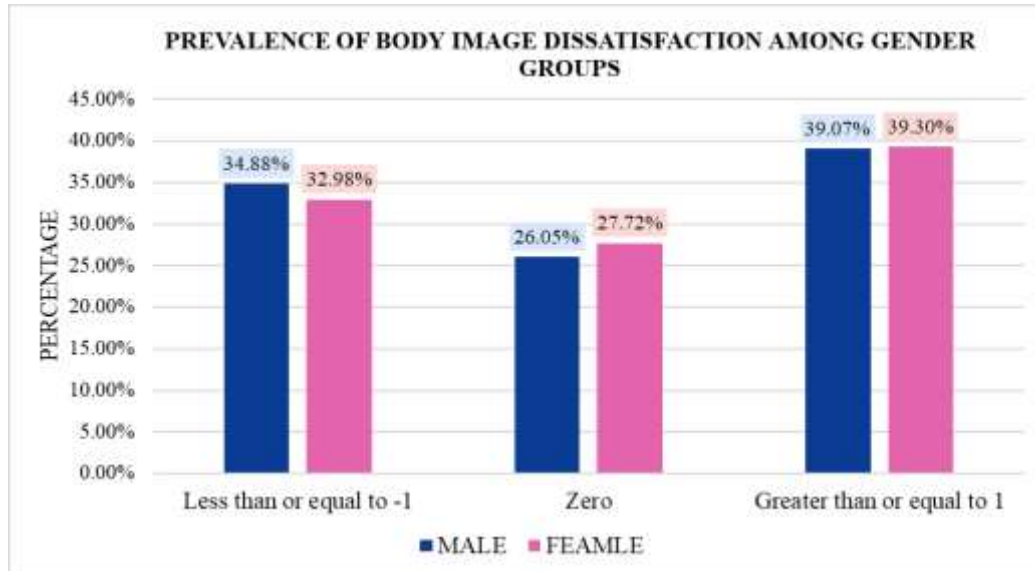
Above mentioned graph shows that among the 500 participants, 21.80% responded that they never constantly check their appearance in the mirror, while 65.40% responded as sometimes, and 12.80% responded as checking their appearance all the time.

COMPARISON OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG GENDER GROUP

TABLE 3: DATA ON PREVALENCE OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG THE GENDER GROUPS

SL. NO	RESPONSE	MALE (n= 215)		FEMALE (n=285)	
		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Less than or equal to -1	75	34.88%	94	32.98%
2	Zero	56	26.05%	79	27.72%
3	Greater than or equal to 1	84	39.07%	112	39.30%
	TOTAL	215	100.00%	285	100.00%

FIGURE 3: DATA ON PREVALENCE OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG THE GENDER GROUPS

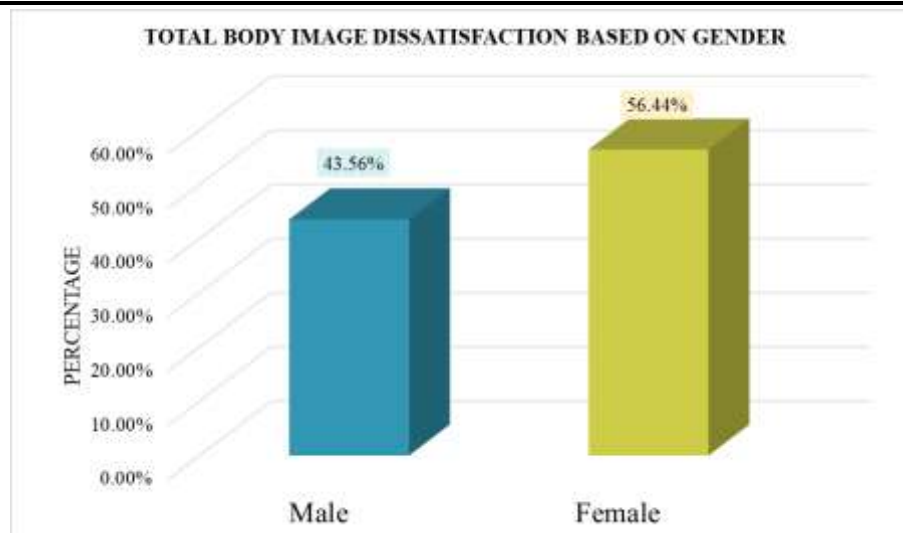


Among 500 study participants, about 215 participants were males and 285 participants were females. From which about 34.88% males tend to gain weight compared to 32.98% of females. At the same time 27.72% females were satisfied with their body image compared to 26.05% males. About 39.30% females tends to lose weight compared to 39.07% of males.

TABLE 4: DATA TO DETERMINE PREVALENCE OF TOTAL BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS BASED ON GENDER

SL.NO	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Male	159	43.56%
2	Female	206	56.44%
	TOTAL	365	100.00%

FIGURE 4: DATA TO DETERMINE PREVALENCE OF TOTAL BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS BASED ON GENDER



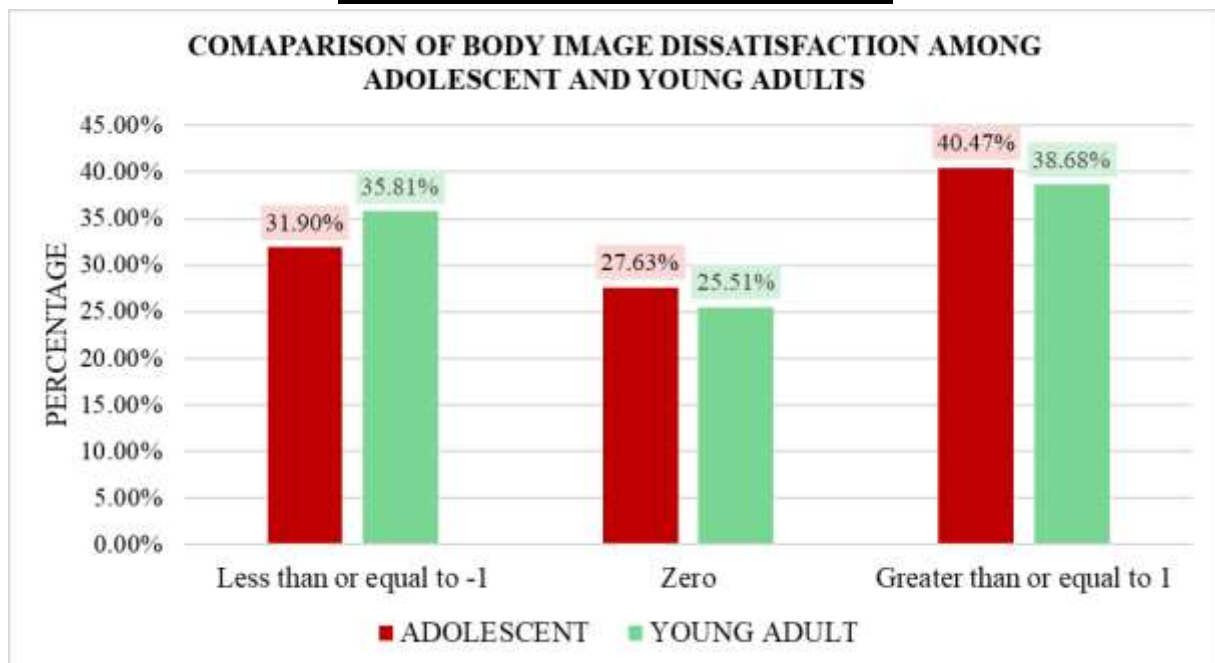
The above graph illustrates that among the total 500 study participants, 365 participants were dissatisfied with their body image, out of that 56.44% were females and 43.56 % were males.

PREVALENCE OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS.

TABLE 5: DATA ON COMPARISON OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULTS

SL. NO	RESPONSE	ADOLESCENTS (n= 257)		YOUNG ADULTS (n=243)	
		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Less than or equal to -1	82	31.90%	87	35.81%
2	Zero	71	27.63%	62	25.51%
3	Greater than or equal to 1	104	40.47%	94	38.68%
	TOTAL	257	100.00%	243	100.00%

FIGURE 5: DATA ON COMPARISON OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULTS

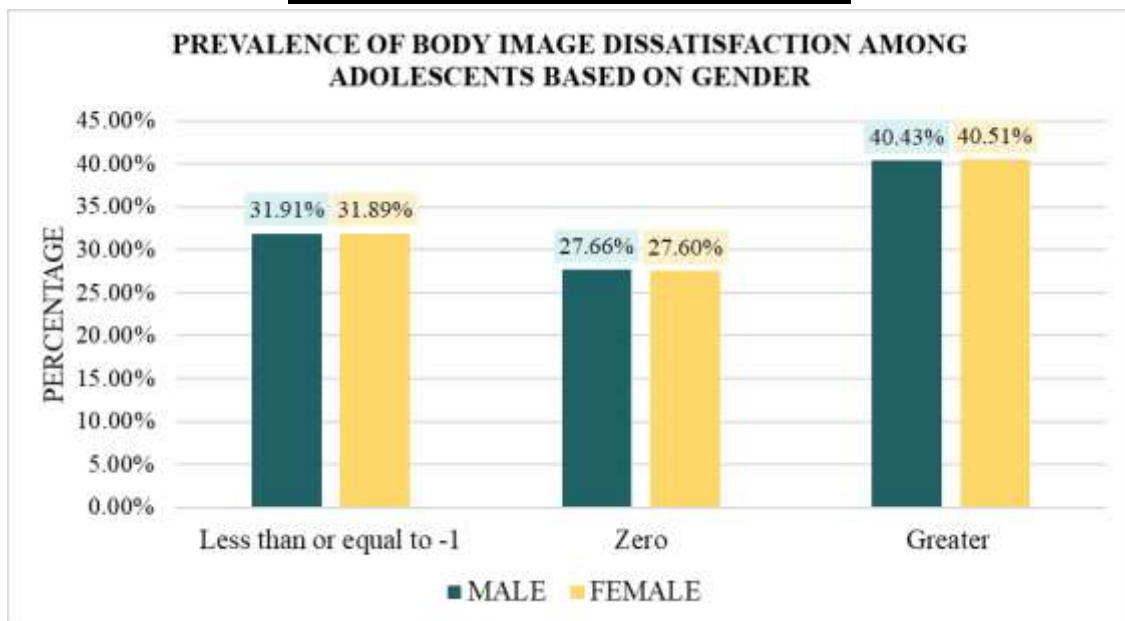


The aforementioned graph indicates data on comparison of body image dissatisfaction of adolescents and young adults among 500 study population. The figure shows that about 35.81% of young adults desires to gain weight compared to 31.90% of adolescents. From which 27.63% adolescents and 25.51% young adults were satisfied with their body image. About 40.47% of adolescents desires to loose their weight compared to 38.68% of young adults.

TABLE 6: DATA ON COMPARISON OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS BASED ON GENDER.

SL. NO	RESPONSE	MALES (n= 141)		FEMALES (n=116)	
		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Less than or equal to -1	45	31.91%	37	31.89%
2	Zero	39	27.66%	32	27.60%
3	Greater than or equal to 1	57	40.43%	47	40.51%
	TOTAL	141	100.00%	116	100.00%

FIGURE 6: DATA ON COMPARISON OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS BASED ON GENDER.



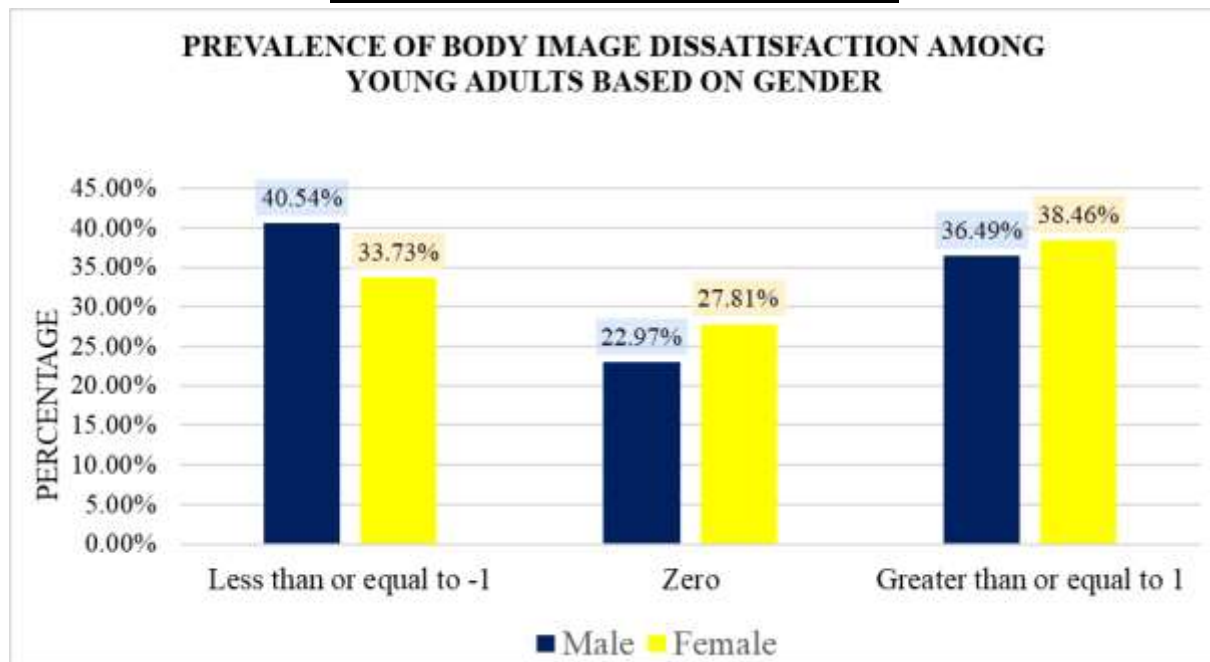
The above mentioned graph analysed the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among adolescents based on gender. Among 500 Study participants, 257 were adolescents from which 141 were males and 116 were females. Among that 31.91% of males tends to gain weight compared to 31.89% of females, while 27.66% of males and 27.60% females were satisfied with their body image. The study also indicates that about 40.51% of females desires to loose weight compared to 40.43% of males.

TABLE 7: DATA ON COMPARISON OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS BASED ON GENDER.

SL. NO	RESPONSE	MALES (n= 74)		FEMALES (n=169)	
		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Less than or equal to -1	30	40.54%	57	33.73%
2	Zero	15	22.97%	47	27.81%

3	Greater than or equal to 1	29	36.49%	65	38.46%
	TOTAL	74	100.00%	169	100.00%

FIGURE 7: DATA ON COMPARISON OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS BASED ON GENDER



The above-mentioned graph analysed the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among young adults based on gender. Among 500 Study participants, 243 were young adults from which 74 were males and 169 were females. Among that 40.54% of males tends to gain weight compared to 33.73% of females, while 22.97% of males and 27.81% females were satisfied with their body image. The study also indicates that about 38.46% of females desires to lose weight compared to 36.49% of males’

DISCUSSION

Dissatisfaction with one's body image is said to arise from a perceived difference between one's intended ideal state of the body and one's actual physical appearance. Adolescents and young adults are most commonly affected. Negative feelings about one's own physical appearance are the foundation of body image dissatisfaction. The term "body image" refers to an individual's emotional attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs regarding their own physical appearance. An individual's nutritional status may be significantly harmed by these concepts, which may then have an effect on their physical and mental health as adults and teens. Body image dissatisfaction can be caused by a variety of factors, including friends, family, the media, and society across the world.

PREVALENCE OF BODY IMAGE DISSATISFACTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS

The key finding of our study is to light upon the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among adolescents and young adults. On comparing the gender groups of adolescents 31.91% males desired to gain weight but only 31.89% females desires to gain weight. While 40.51% females desired to be thinner

but only 40.43% males desired to be thinner. 27.66% males and 27.60 % females were satisfied with their body image.

On comparing the gender groups of young adults 40.54% males desired to gain weight but only 33.73% females desires to gain weight. While 38.46% females desired to be thinner but only 36.49% males desired to be thinner. 22.97% males and 27.81 % females were satisfied with their body image. On comparing the levels dissatisfaction, young adults has more dissatisfaction by 74.49% when compared 72.37% adolescents.

CONCLUSION

Body image dissatisfaction is common among adolescents and young adults. Body image dissatisfaction is defined as a distorted perception of how someone sees their own body. We attempted to evaluate the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among adolescents and young adults through our cross-sectional study. This study provides a comprehensive assessment of the prevalence of body image dissatisfaction among adolescents and young adults, revealing critical insights into the factors influencing this phenomenon. Our findings indicate that body image dissatisfaction is notably more prevalent among females compared to males. Additionally, young adults exhibit higher levels of dissatisfaction with their body image compared to adolescents. Our findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address body image dissatisfaction, particularly among young adults and females.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS;

Acknowledgments

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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